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Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Ever loving and eternal God, source of the light that never dims and of the love that never fails, help us to live in faithful expectation of Your triumph in our world. Fill us with hope that we will not become discouraged because of setbacks. Take away doubts that disturb us and worries that distract us. Empower our Senators to be instruments of Your purposes. Make them content to faithfully serve as they live in peace with others.

Give each of us the peace that passes understanding.

We pray in Your loving Name, Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will begin a 30-minute period of morning business. When that time has expired, we will begin consideration of the House message to accompany the deficit reduction bill.

Last night the agreement we entered allows for up to 7 motions to instruct conferees. Several Members spoke to these motions, debating their motions yesterday. Today we will vote on those, prior to lunch.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that at 11:45 this morning we proceed to three consecutive votes, first on the Baucus motion to instruct, to be followed by the Carper motion, to be followed by the Harkin motion; provided further that there be 2 minutes equally divided for debate prior to each of the votes; finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the third vote the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 for the policy luncheon to meet.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, therefore, Senators can expect three votes beginning at 11:45 today. The remaining motions will be debated this morning and this afternoon, and those votes will be scheduled for Thursday afternoon at approximately 3:30.

Today we expect the PATRIOT Act conference report to arrive from the House. If we are unable to reach consent for a limited debate time, then I am prepared to file cloture on that conference report.

I do hope we can come to a consent for the debate time. If not, cloture can be expected. If that is the case, that vote would occur Friday morning. The Labor-Health and Human Services ap-

propriations conference report may also be available to the Senate today. I will be consulting with my colleagues about scheduling that vote as well.

In addition to the items I have mentioned, there is a number of other legislative and executive items that remain. These include the Defense authorization conference report, the Defense appropriations conference report.

As I have said over the last several days on the floor, I urge all Members to remain available and to adjust their schedules accordingly for the remainder of this week and into this weekend, and perhaps beyond as we schedule our final business of this year. We will make every effort to conclude our work as quickly as possible, but it will require the patience and cooperation of all Senators. As all of my colleagues understand, there is a lot of coordination with the House of Representatives with bills going back and forth.

I thank everyone for their help in advance as we move forward on these matters.

COMBAT METH ACT

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I briefly speak to an issue that is important to me and important to the American people. As we continue our debate on the PATRIOT Act conference report, I call my colleagues' attention to a special crimefighting provision that promises to thwart the No. 1 drug problem in America today, methamphetamine. The provision is called the Combat Meth Act. It enjoys broad bipartisan support in this body. It is a part of the PATRIOT Act legislation.

In particular, I want to thank my colleague from Missouri, Senator TALENT, for his tireless efforts in advancing this pressing issue. He has been focused on it, and he has talked to all of our colleagues about it. He very passionately expresses the need and the critical importance of this bill. He has

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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worked hand in hand with our colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, and together they introduced the Combat Meth Act in January of this year.

As leadership, I was proud to work with our corresponding House leadership to encourage our Members to work with all of our counterparts to get this done, to work in a bicameral way.

The Combat Meth Act is a victory for law enforcement, a victory for our communities, and a victory for every family who has experienced the pain and the destruction of methamphetamine abuse. In 10 years—one decade—meth has become America's worst drug problem. That is above marijuana, cocaine, heroin—over the last 10 years. It is destroying individuals.

We have all heard stories in our various States and districts of families and whole communities being destroyed by the new emergence of methamphetamine and the destruction it causes. My own State of Tennessee has been hit particularly hard. In 2004, Tennessee ranked No. 2, tied with Iowa and just behind Missouri, in the number of methamphetamine lab seizures. Sandy Mattice, a former U.S. Attorney in Tennessee, and now a Federal judge in Chattanooga, calls meth "the worst stuff" we have ever seen. It has led to some of the worst and most disturbing cases of violence to hit the front pages of today.

This August, when I was back at home traveling across Tennessee, I heard stories again and again from my fellow Tennesseans of the devastating destruction meth is creating in communities all across the State. I heard about addicted mothers and fathers abusing their children, abusing each other during the highs and the lows created by methamphetamine use. I heard about addicts stealing from their own spouses, stealing from their own families because they were so desperate to support this highly addictive drug and the habit that becomes a part of it.

There is one Tennessee story which was so horrific that it made national news. Because it was so accurately reflective of the destruction and pain created by meth, the laws in Tennessee were changed.

In June of last year, authorities found 3-year-old Haley Spicer in her father's mobile home in Campbell County. Haley had been burned over her body with cigarettes, she had been scalded with hot water, and she had been severely beaten. The fumes from her father's meth lab were so toxic that Haley's eyelids were nearly melted shut. Haley has undergone several surgeries to open her eyes. She faces a number of operations in the future to rebuild her nose and to rebuild her injured ear.

Haley's father Tommy Joe Owens was sentenced in October to 95 years in prison for what he did to his child. His live-in girlfriend Charlotte Claiborne pleaded no contest and was sentenced to 20 years behind bars.

Haley's case was so shocking that in August the State legislature passed Haley's Law to drastically toughen child abuse penalties. This was an important victory for child abuse victims, but it didn't get to the concurrent problem of meth abuse and addiction which led to this crime.

Local law enforcement—I heard it all over the State—is literally overwhelmed by the meth crisis. They are calling out for our help. They need us to pass the Combat Meth Act to restrict access to the cold medicines that contain pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, which are the key ingredients easily obtained today and used to manufacture methamphetamine. Once you have those ingredients, meth can literally be manufactured with a few pots and pans in a kitchen.

While some States, such as my home State of Tennessee, have passed laws restricting access to these products, other States have not yet acted. As a result, meth cooks can jump from one State to another State to another State to get the over-the-counter ingredients they use to make this highly addictive toxin.

Law enforcement and prosecutors tell me the single greatest impact we could have on reducing meth abuse is to require all 50 States to restrict access to the cold medicines containing the ingredients used to make methamphetamine. Data from States that have gone ahead and passed laws restricting access to these precursor chemicals proves that indeed to be the case. They work.

Oklahoma, for instance, passed a law last year and with this law has seen a dramatic reduction in meth lab seizures. Data from my own State of Tennessee—we passed a similar law earlier in the year—shows the same trend, a steady decline in meth lab seizures.

The Combat Meth Act will require all 50 States to do what Oklahoma and Tennessee have done. The Combat Meth Act is critical to containing and defeating the meth epidemic. We need one uniform standard to close the loopholes in the system so that producers can't cruise from State to State exploiting our differences.

I again thank Senator TALENT and Senator FEINSTEIN for their leadership and for pushing hard to get this done.

I urge my colleagues to pass the PATRIOT Act, which includes this much needed law. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for law enforcement across this land in our communities. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for towns and for communities and cities all across America. It is a victory for all of the innocent individuals and families who have been harmed by this dangerous and deadly drug.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

SECOND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAMS

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, last week I had the privilege of meeting pri-

vately with numerous soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division, which is stationed at Fort Carson, CO. These soldiers had just returned from their first tour in Iraq where they helped maintain the peace near the former terrorist hot-bed of Fallujah. I spent over an hour talking with them about their experiences, asking them about their challenges, and hearing their thoughts about whether we should stay the course in Iraq.

These soldiers spent the last year fighting the Iraqi terrorists, in some cases house-to-house. They helped train several Iraqi security units and participated in numerous reconstruction projects throughout central Iraq. Sadly, they lost 68 of their own while in Iraq. Yet, while they deeply mourn the loss of their comrades, they have no regrets about their time in Iraq.

Indeed, if there was one thing I took away from my meeting with the soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, it was that each and every one of these soldiers was proud of their accomplishments in Iraq. They completed their mission well and helped thousands of Iraqis better understand the value of freedom and prosperity.

And why shouldn't these soldiers be proud of what they achieved? The progress we have made in Iraq is breath-taking, and these soldiers have been a part of it.

Those who believe that the war in Iraq has become a quagmire certainly haven't been paying attention. The President's strategy is working and we are making progress.

The reconstruction accomplishments in Iraq are staggering:

Over 3,000 schools have been renovated and refurbished; 133,000 primary school teachers—a third of Iraq's educators—have received additional training and technical assistance; primary school enrollment is up 19 percent from prewar levels; nearly 250 health care centers have been renovated and another 563 have received new equipment; over 2,500 primary health care workers have received training to better meet the Iraq's health care needs; in 2005 alone, 98 percent of Iraqi children between 1 and 5 years old have been immunized against measles, mumps, and rubella; more than 3 million Iraqis now have clean water, which was not adequately supplied before the war; more than 4.5 million Iraqis benefit from sewage disposal projects the United States has funded; sewage in many areas of Iraq used to literally run down the streets; 30,000 new businesses have registered with the Iraqi government in the past year alone; Iraqis are buying televisions, air conditioners, microwave ovens, and cell phones—all goods that were nearly impossible to buy unless you were one of Saddam's cronies; the generation of electricity is significantly higher than prewar level, though this area remains a challenge because of the power-consuming goods the Iraqis are buying.